



Town of Groton, Connecticut

Meeting Minutes

Town Council

45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk (860)441-6640
Town Manager
(860)441-6630

Mayor Harry A. Watson, Councilors Heather Sherman Bond, Kathryn M. Brown-Tracy, Catherine Kolnaski, Deborah B. Monteiro, Frank O'Beirne, Jr., Rita M. Schmidt, Paulann H. Sheets, and James L. Streeter

Wednesday, February 6, 2008

7:30 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

SPECIAL MEETING

I. ROLL CALL

Mayor Harry Watson called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.

Members Present: Mayor Watson, Councilor Bond, Councilor Brown-Tracy, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor Monteiro, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Sheets and Councilor Streeter

Members Absent: Councilor Schmidt

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Assistant to the Town Manager Lee Vincent, Town Clerk Barbara Tarbox, and Office Assistant Lori Watrous.

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Salute to the Flag was led by Scott Martin.

III. RECOGNITIONS, AWARDS & MEMORIALS

2008-0037 Proclamation Recognizing Brian Grasser

Read

Mayor Watson read the proclamation which he had presented to Eagle Scout Brian Grasser.

PUBLIC HEARING

Recess for Public Hearing to Solicit Comments Prior to Preparation of the Proposed FYE 2009 Budget

Mayor Watson called a recess for the Public Hearing at 7:36 p.m.

2007-0310 FYE 2009 Budget

Discussed

Ed Eckelmeyer, 75 High Street, Mystic, is a supporter of the Groton Parks and Recreation boating program. He stated that the Spicer House is a jewel for boating activities due to the presence of a dock, boathouse, and rare public access connecting to open water. While fundraising efforts will continue, Mr. Eckelmeyer requested \$15,000 be added to the budget to fund a boating coordinator. There is an excellent candidate in mind for this position, and it is anticipated that this support would be needed for 2-3 years.

Kit Talbot, 10 Florence Drive, Mystic, commented that individuals representing all age groups have taken instruction in rowing, with some of the young people continuing on to participate in college crew teams. While rowing used to be an elite sport only available to fairly wealthy individuals, through this program it has been made available to our citizens. Ms. Talbot is concerned that this opportunity will disappear, and she implores the town for its continued support.

Kristen Negaard, 99 Noble Avenue, has been a rowing coach since 1976 for both high school and college levels, currently coaching at Fitch Senior High School. The protected waters near Spicer House have enabled her to have more individuals on the water. Involvement ranges between 20-35 people throughout the year, with higher numbers during the summer months. This is a lifelong sport that some have taken well into their 80's. Ms. Negaard requests that the Council think about the opportunity this sport provides before burdening the program to a point where it is

unable to grow.

Natalie Billing, 15 Ashby Street, Mystic, asked that a middle of the road approach be taken for the budget. She requests that we maintain classroom sizes, programs, and services currently offered in the school systems. A second area of concern is the retention of the staff within the Social Services Department. Speaking as President of MASH (Mystic Area Shelter and Hospitality Program), she stated that the impact of the decreased staffing has already been felt. Ms. Billing stated that until we have comprehensive property tax reform, we are too reliant on property taxes.

Genevieve Cerf, 17 Crescent Street, GLP, offers strong support to both the rowing and MASH programs. Regarding open space, she requested an increase from \$25,000 to \$100,000; specifically to obtain land located around watershed areas. Preventing deforestation is a primary reason for this request. To keep our seniors located in our town, Ms. Cerf also requested that either a tax deferment, tax relief, or a tax credit be implemented in this year's budget.

John Sutherland, 32 Neptune Drive, stated that the Board of Education budget as submitted is alarming due to steadily declining enrollment. Signs of a recession are on the horizon, along with the pressures that go with it. Mr. Sutherland requested that serious consideration be given to controlling cost increases in the FYE 2009 budget, as well as incorporating some level of cost reduction.

There being no further comments, Mayor Watson closed the Public Hearing at 8:14 p.m.

IV. CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Gary Annino, 91 Main Street, North Stonington, is a manager of projects at Pfizer Global Manufacturing in Groton. He wanted to have the opportunity to make a presentation about the proposed Cogeneration Facility at the Groton Plant, specifically addressing any concerns of the Town Council or the community. He recognized that tonight isn't the time for making that presentation.

Genevieve Cerf, 17 Crescent Street, GLP, would like to see a tax credit for seniors in lieu of a relief program. She stated that the first year should start modestly, allocating one-half toward credits and one-half toward deferments. Ms. Cerf has outlined this plan and a copy will be placed on the Senior Center bulletin board. She recommended that seniors read it and provide feedback to Town Councilors.

John Sutherland, 32 Neptune Drive, said that he understands that only four people take advantage of the deferment program, one of them having substantial property. He stated that the deferral option is not a very good option, and that the only thing that works is a true credit. Mr. Sutherland suggested that it would make sense to implement a test program to gauge its effectiveness.

V. RESPONSES TO CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Councilor Sheets requested clarification from Mr. Sutherland, and he concurred that he was not referring to low-income seniors.

Councilor Kolnaski would like to have Gary Annino come to the Committee of the Whole meeting and make a presentation, as well as answer questions and concerns.

Councilor Sheets requested clarification from Mr. Annino as to his purpose for attending the Council meeting. He replied that he would like to address the article in the Mystic River Press where a declaratory ruling process was referenced as a shortcut to the process. Mr. Annino is also concerned that a letter to the Siting Council asking for a full hearing would result in a long drawn-out process, and he would like to address the issues locally.

Councilor Sheets clarified the hearing process for Mr. Annino.

Mayor Watson suggested that this discussion be continued during discussion of the agenda item under the New Business portion of the meeting.

VI. CONSENT CALENDAR

a. Approval of Minutes

2008-0040 Approval of Minutes (Town Council)

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council meeting of January 15, 2008 are hereby accepted and approved.

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

b. Administrative Items

2008-0031 Special Trust Fund Contributions

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING CONTRIBUTIONS TO SPECIAL TRUST FUNDS

RESOLVED, that the Town Council hereby accepts contributions to the Town as follows:

Christie Max Williams and Cate Moffett - \$25.00 - Mystic Arts Cafe
Katherine Bishop - \$50.00 - Mystic Arts Cafe
Hiroko Masamune - \$50.00 - Mystic Arts Cafe
Sharon Sanders - \$100.00 - Mystic Arts Cafe
Anonymous - \$45.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving
Priscilla P. Anson - \$25.00 - Mystic Arts Cafe
Various Donations - \$770.29 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Jim Marshall - \$100.00 - Mystic Arts Cafe
Susan Decorte - \$221.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving
Richard Gunnell - \$33.34 - Parks and Recreation Revolving
Pfizer United Way Campaign - \$36.59 - Library Discretionary
Anonymous - \$3.00 - Social Services Discretionary
Cheryl Dominy - \$50.00 - Social Services Discretionary
Groton Senior Citizens Club - \$250.00 - Social Services Discretionary
Judith Leonard - \$25.00 - Social Services Discretionary
Robert Schneider - \$30.00 - Social Services Discretionary
Waterford Group-Mystic Marriott - \$2,500.00 - Social Services Discretionary
Various Donations - \$824.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Groton Utilities - \$297.06 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
CT Section of the PGA - \$1,000.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

c. Deletions from the Town Council Referral List

2008-0035 Office of Statewide Telecommunications Grant - Communications Tower Upgrade

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2007-0305 FYE 2007 CAFR

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2008-0016 Reallocation of CIP Funds - Police Station Renovations

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2008-0025 Pfizer Power Generating Facility

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2008-0039 Appointments to Neighborhood Revitalization Zone Committee

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2006-0298 Steamboat Wharf Dredging Request

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2007-0285 CGS 8-24 Referral to Planning Commission of Conveyance of Town Property

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - No further action on the Consent Calendar.

Passed The Consent Calendar

A motion was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., to adopt the Consent Calendar, including all the preceding items marked as having been adopted on the Consent Calendar.

The motion carried unanimously

VII. COMMUNICATIONS & REPORTS (Other than Committee Reports)**a. Town Councilors**

Councilor Kolnaski attended the Board of Education (BOE) budget review and budget hearing meetings. She, along with Mayor Watson, attended the Groton Town Police swearing-in and promotion ceremony. She and other councilors attended the ceremony and ribbon cutting at the Catherine Kolnaski Magnet School and Northeast Academy. The events were well-attended, and people were both impressed and amazed at the structure and offerings for student learning. She attended the Ledge Light Health District Board of Directors special session at which they discussed and presented clarifications prioritizing the organizational values, the purpose and review of their mission, and meaning of their work. She received a guide to appointing local board members, and forwarded a copy of this guide to the Personnel Appointments/Rules Committee.

Councilor Streeter received emails regarding the firefighter tax credit and the senior tax credit. He also received an invitation to attend the public hearing regarding funding DEP program for parks. He was asked to attend in support of the Fort Griswold Park, and plans on attending as a citizen rather than as a member of the Council.

Councilor Bond received calls regarding senior tax relief, the budget, and the firefighter tax credit.

Councilor Sheets attended a nationwide program at UCONN, Avery Point, to raise consciousness about climate change as well as a class held the next day specifically on physics which was more complicated. She received calls regarding senior tax relief.

Councilor Monterio attended a Golf Advisory Board meeting, and received an email regarding firefighter tax relief.

Councilor Brown-Tracy attended the Mohegan Legislative Breakfast.

2008-0047 20th Anniversary of Mystic Pizza**20TH ANNIVERSARY OF MYSTIC PIZZA**

Councilor Brown-Tracy received a communication that Mystic Pizza will be having their 20th anniversary soon, and requested a referral for a celebration to mark this event. This item will be referred to the Community & Cultural Development Committee.

Mayor Watson attended a conference at the Mystic Marriott on economic development and tourism. He presented a proclamation to Eagle Scout Brian Grasser. He worked as a ballot clerk during the primary at District 5. Mayor Watson noted that more workers will be needed for the upcoming presidential election, and advised interested individuals to call the Town Clerk or the Registrars' Office. He received a call from Cdr. McKenna regarding recognition of individuals

assisting with the rescue of two persons in distress. There will be a ceremony at the New London Coast Guard Station on Friday at 12:30. He received an email about a meeting for a proposed hiking/biking trail from Preston Community Park to Bluff Point. The Mayor attended the COG meeting and the installation of officers at the Senior Center. He attended the Joint Meeting TC/BOE and the Mohegan Legislative Breakfast. He attended a meeting at the United Way to update the 10-year plan to end homelessness in southeastern CT.

b. Clerk of the Representative Town Meeting

There will be a meeting on Wednesday, February 13, 2008.

c. Clerk of the Council

The primaries were held with the best turnout in a long time, with participation totaling 37% of Republicans and 52% of Democrats. Unaffiliated voters represented 90% of the incoming calls, concerned that they could not vote in the primary. If in doubt whether you are affiliated with a party, contact the Registrars' Office. The following items have been posted to the website: the Town Council rules, and Charter Revision Commission items. There are multiple openings on various committees throughout the Town; if interested in volunteering please contact the Town Clerk's office.

d. Town Manager

Town Manager Oefinger remarked that he has an upcoming meeting with legislators on February 19, 2008; if there is anything to relay to them, please let him know. Mayor Watson responded with topics of civilians living in Navy housing and educational aid, while Councilor Bond suggested terrorist threats. A legislative package will be also be compiled for the National League of Cities conference with four to seven issues for research. There will be a benefit golf tournament for Ken's Tackle Shop on February 10, 2008. If interested, contact Par Four. Both of the recent school dedication ceremonies were videotaped, and will be run on Channel 2.

e. Town Attorney

No report.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Community & Cultural Development - Chairman Brown-Tracy

No meeting, no report.

b. Economic Development - Chairman Bond

No meeting, no report.

c. Education/Health & Social Services - Chairman Kolnaski

No meeting, no report.

d. Environment/Energy - Chairman Sheets

Councilor Sheets reported that there was a meeting on January 22, 2008 at which a presentation was made on global climate change. An eighteen-page document was prepared as groundwork for the presentation that included cities in Connecticut that have already been awarded grants, and a brief summary of the activities of both the Conference of Mayors and the State.

e. Finance - Chairman Schmidt

A meeting was held, but no report was given due to the fact that Councilor Schmidt was absent.

f. Personnel/Appointments/Rules - Chairman O'Beirne

Councilor O'Beirne read the minutes of the meeting held January 22, 2008, which are on file in the Town Clerk's office.

g. Public Safety - Chairman Streeter

Councilor Streeter read the minutes of the meeting held on January 22, 2008, which are on file in the Town Clerk's office.

h. Public Works/Recreation - Chairman Monteiro

Councilor Monteiro read the minutes of the meeting held on January 22, 2008, which are on file in the Town Clerk's office.

i. Committee of the Whole - Mayor Watson

Three items were discussed: the comprehensive financial report, the Pfizer Power Generating Facility, and the reallocation of funds.

IX. NEW BUSINESS**2008-0035 Office of Statewide Telecommunications Grant - Communications Tower Upgrade**

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A GRANT FROM THE STATEWIDE OFFICE OF EMERGENCY TELECOMMUNICATIONS (OSET)

WHEREAS, a project to repair and upgrade the antenna towers for vital emergency communications at the Groton public safety facility is under way, and

WHEREAS, the funding of \$63,310 budgeted for this purpose in the general maintenance accounts since 2005 is now inadequate for the currently needed repairs, and

WHEREAS, the Office of Statewide Emergency Telecommunications (OSET) now provides grants for appropriate capital projects at emergency dispatch centers, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Manager may apply for an OSET grant of \$17,185.

A motion was made by Councilor Brown-Tracy, seconded by Councilor Streeter, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2007-0305 FYE 2007 CAFR

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE FYE 2007 AUDIT REPORT

WHEREAS, the Town Council has considered the annual audit of the Town of Groton's finances, covering the fiscal year from July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2007, and

WHEREAS, the Council has discussed the audit findings with the manager of the audit team from the firm of Blum Shapiro, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town of Groton accepts and files the FYE 2007 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR), the Auditor's Reports and Management Letter.

A motion was made by Councilor Bond, seconded by Councilor Brown-Tracy, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2008-0016 Reallocation of CIP Funds - Police Station Renovations

RESOLUTION REALLOCATING CAPITAL PROJECTS FUNDING SOURCES BETWEEN LOCAL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM FUNDS (LOCIP) AND CAPITAL RESERVE FUND

WHEREAS, the FYE 2008 Capital Projects budget approved \$205,000 for Project 6)B Police Station including \$150,000 in LoCIP funding to undertake needed renovations to the detectives' work area, including the purchase of furniture, along with changes in interior walls and mechanical and electrical systems, and

WHEREAS, it has since been determined that LoCIP funds cannot be used for the purchase of furniture, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that \$150,000 in LoCIP funds previously approved for Project 6)B Police Station be transferred to Project 3)C New Sidewalk Construction, and that \$150,000 in Capital Reserve funding previously approved for Project 3)C New Sidewalk Construction be transferred to Project 6)B Police Station.

Refer to RTM

A motion was made by Councilor Streeter, seconded by Councilor Kolnaski, that this matter be Adopted and Referred to the Representative Town Meeting.

The motion carried unanimously

Councilor Bond left the meeting at this time.

Members Present: Mayor Watson, Councilor Brown-Tracy, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor Monteiro, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Sheets and Councilor Streeter

Members Absent: Councilor Bond and Councilor Schmidt

2008-0025

Pfizer Power Generating Facility

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A LETTER TO THE SITING COUNCIL CONCERNING THE TOWN'S INTERESTS IN A PROPOSED COGENERATION PLANT OF PFIZER, INC.

WHEREAS, Pfizer has requested various approvals for a co-generation steam and electricity plant to be located on its campus in the City of Groton, and

WHEREAS, the Town of Groton has been invited by the Siting Council to comment on the proposed cogeneration plant of Pfizer, Inc. and has the statutory right to be a party to the declaratory ruling proceeding on the power plant, upon giving notice of its intention to do so, and

WHEREAS, the Town Council deems it necessary to call attention to such issues as noise levels, the transportation of ammonia on public streets, use of water for cooling, and other matters of concern to residents, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Manager is authorized to send a letter identifying the above-noted issues to the Siting Council and to make such other appearances and communications as may appropriately represent the concerns of the Groton Town Council.

A motion was made by Councilor Sheets, seconded by Councilor Brown-Tracy, that this matter be Adopted.

Councilor Sheets outlined the letter that was drafted to the Siting Council, stating that the necessity of the letter arose from the omission of any reference to aqueous ammonia in the petition, PowerPoint package, newspaper article, or the public informational meeting.

MOTION TO AMEND

A motion to Amend the Resolution to replace the second paragraph with the following was made by Councilor Sheets, seconded by Councilor Monteiro:

"WHEREAS, the Town of Groton has been invited by the Siting Council to comment on the proposed cogeneration plant of Pfizer, Inc. and has the statutory right to be a party to the declaratory ruling proceeding on the power plant, upon giving notice of its intention to do so, and...."

Councilor Sheets feels that the amendment is a more accurate statement of the Council's right to comment on this issue.

VOTE on Motion to Amend passed unanimously.

Town Manager Mark Oefinger encouraged the Council to sit down with Pfizer before sending this letter or passing this resolution.

MOTION TO RE-REFER this item to Committee of the Whole was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Mayor Watson.

VOTE on Motion to re-refer failed 2 in Favor, 5 Opposed. (In Favor: Councilor Kolnaski and Mayor Watson)

A MOTION TO MOVE THE QUESTION was made by Councilor O'Beirne, seconded by Councilor Sheets.

The vote on Moving the Question passed 6 in Favor, 1 Opposed (Opposed: Councilor Kolnaski).

Mr. Annino was invited to address questions and concerns at the COW meeting on Tuesday.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Votes: In Favor: 5 - Councilor Brown-Tracy, Councilor Monteiro, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Sheets and Councilor Streeter
Opposed: 2 - Mayor Watson and Councilor Kolnaski

2008-0039

Appointments to Neighborhood Revitalization Zone Committee

RESOLUTION APPOINTING AND REAPPOINTING MEMBERS OF THE FORT HILL NRZ COMMITTEE

RESOLVED, that the following appointments and reappointments to the Fort Hill Area Neighborhood Revitalization Zone Committee are hereby made with terms as indicated.

Appointments:

Paul Nichols (ex officio), Neighborhood and Community Planner, Town of Groton, 134 Groton Long Point Road, Groton - Term expiring 12/31/09
Libby Ribarich, 138 Midway Oval, Groton (homeowner) - Term expiring 12/31/10

Reappointments:

Officer Dexter Herron, Community Policing Officer, Town of Groton, 68 Groton Long Point Road, Groton - Term expiring 12/31/10
Lisa Gernhard, 75 Midway Oval, Groton (homeowner) - Term expiring 12/31/09
Cindy Baril, 26 St. Joseph Court, Groton (homeowner) - Term expiring 12/31/10

A motion was made by Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., seconded by Councilor Kolnaski, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2006-0298

Steamboat Wharf Dredging Request

RESOLUTION REAFFIRMING THE EXPENDITURE OF APPROPRIATED FUNDS FOR DREDGING AT STEAMBOAT WHARF

WHEREAS, in the resolution in legislative matter 2006-0204 the Town Council authorized, for dredging in the Mystic River adjacent to the Steamboat Wharf residences, the use of \$13,800 that was remaining from the total of \$21,000 that was previously appropriated by the Town Council and RTM in file number 2004-0272 for sediment removal, and

WHEREAS, in view of the passage of time since that authorization, the Town Council has reviewed the proposed effort and finds that DOT has secured a permit from DEP for the dredging, and

WHEREAS, it is not yet known how much contribution, if, any, can be expected from Connecticut DEP and from the residents/owners of Steamboat Wharf, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Council reaffirms its authorization that Town funds in the amount of \$13,800 can be expended for the above-described project and hereby affirms that Town Manager Mark R. Oefinger may execute all such documents as may be required for the completion of the dredging.

A motion was made by Councilor Monteiro, seconded by Councilor Streeter, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

X. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn at 9:43 p.m. was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor Monteiro and so voted unanimously.

Attest:

*Barbara Tarbox, Town Clerk
Clerk of the Council*

Lori Watrous, Office Assistant